

# Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan enhancements

---

This document answers frequently asked questions about the enhancements to the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan announced in March 2024.

---

## Why did the NSW Government review the CPCP?

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP) was approved in August 2022. It aims to get the balance right between the need for additional housing and protecting Western Sydney's unique biodiversity.

The NSW Minister for the Environment asked the former Department of Planning and Environment (now the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) to review the CPCP to enhance biodiversity outcomes while continuing to deliver the much-needed additional housing in Western Sydney. The departments worked together to identify 8 enhancements to fast-track conservation actions and strengthen planning measures under the CPCP.

## What are the CPCP enhancements?

The 8 CPCP enhancements are:

1. Publish a map of koala habitat and corridors in the region. This map will reflect the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's advice, and planning controls will be updated to ensure that land on the map is rezoned C2 Environment Conservation zone (or similar zone) at the planning proposal stage. Any re-zoning would only come into effect when a new planning proposal for relevant land is submitted to a consent authority for consideration.
2. Prepare koala fencing guidelines to provide clarity to landholders, developers and consent authorities on the best-practice design for koala exclusion fencing, including technical specifications and location.
3. Update planning controls to clarify that land avoided from development under the CPCP should be zoned C2 Environmental Conservation Zone (or similar) at the planning proposal stage.
4. Provide precinct planning level guidance about protecting native vegetation and the benefits of co-locating open space and parks with existing vegetation to reduce urban heat effects and support more liveable communities.
5. Fast-track the delivery of a new national park in the Gulguer area to provide an east-west connection for wildlife between Burragorang State Conservation Area and

Gulguer Nature Reserve, including \$49 million to purchase private land for the first stage of the national park.

6. Protect around 60 hectares of critically endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland by committing an additional \$22 million to purchase biodiversity credits.
7. Protect small, isolated patches of high-value vegetation which would otherwise likely degrade over time through a \$31 million voluntary private land acquisition program in areas such as Orchard Hills and the Aerotropolis.
8. Commit \$2.5 million to start delivering the Caring for Country Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy including cultural burning and ranger program.

### How will the changes affect housing and biodiversity?

The enhancements have been designed to strengthen biodiversity outcomes while still delivering critical housing. The certified land covering more than 11,000 hectares under the CPCP approval has not changed.

### Will the CPCP be updated?

The CPCP and the related sub-plans will not be changed at this stage. Following appropriate consultation, the department will update relevant planning controls such as the [State Environmental Planning Policy \(Biodiversity and Conservation\) 2021](#) to implement the CPCP enhancements.

### Will there be further consultation before these actions are delivered?

The department will consult with community and stakeholders on updated planning controls as part of delivering the package of CPCP enhancements.

### Do these planning changes come into effect now?

No. The department will consult on the proposed changes. New planning controls will not come into effect until these changes are consulted on and made.

### How will these changes affect Commonwealth approval of the CPCP?

The department is pursuing Strategic Assessment under Part 10 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* over land to which the CPCP applies. The department engaged extensively with the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) throughout the CPCP's development. The CPCP was submitted to DCCEEW in 2022 and the departments remain in regular contact about its approval.

### How do these announcements affect landholders?

The CPCP removes the need for landholders on certified urban-capable land to seek their own state biodiversity approvals. Under the enhancements, landowners can continue to use their property as they do now. Landholders can also continue to seek development approvals without the need to prepare their own site-specific biodiversity assessments, noting that development that will impact on matters of national

environmental significance (MNES) cannot start until the Commonwealth CPCP approval is in place or the landowner has their own Commonwealth EPBC Act approval.

### Will my land now be zoned C2?

No. The enhancements do not change existing land uses. Existing activities or development appropriate to the land's existing zoning can still occur (with appropriate approvals). The enhancements apply to avoided land or koala habitat or corridors. Any requirement for environment conservation zoning would only come into effect when a consent authority is considering a new planning proposal.

### Do these enhancements “lock up” more land?

No. Avoided land or koala habitat and corridors may be suitable for passive recreation. Being able to access these areas is an important part of ensuring Western Sydney's unique biodiversity is valued and cared for into the future. Potential recreation opportunities, such as walking and biking, will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Active recreation, such as sporting fields, is unlikely to be a suitable use.

### What changes are proposed to guidelines and how will they be implemented?

Proposed changes to guidelines include clearer requirements for koala exclusion fencing and guidance on opportunities for co-locating open space and parks with remnant vegetation. These changes will be consulted on and will not take effect until made through the planning system.

### Do I now need to retain more native vegetation on certified land?

The CPCP removes the need for landholders to seek their own state biodiversity approvals for certified urban-capable land, subject to requirements in Chapter 13 of the SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021 and the CPCP Mitigation Measures Guidelines.

The enhancements include updates to the CPCP Mitigation Measures Guidelines to include further guidance on the benefits of co-locating complementary land uses (e.g. open space) in areas with existing vegetation.

This will provide opportunities for additional biodiversity to be protected as part of open space planning for new release areas, which may protect additional green space and tree canopy for the enjoyment of future residents.

These additional considerations are intended to apply at the precinct or master planning stage and will be consulted on before they commence.